

Message Text

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11
ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DPW-01 SY-10 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAM-01 AID-20 EUR-25 IO-14 OC-06 CCO-00 DRC-01

A-01 /171 W
----- 100203

R 200335Z FEB 74
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7764
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
CINCPAC
CDR USSAG NKP
SECDEF
JCS

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 VIENTIANE 1338

CANBERRA FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY INGERSOLL

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PFOR, MOPS, LA
SUBJECT: MISSION PLANNING FOR OPERATIONS AFTER FORMATION OF NEW
PGNU

BEGIN SUMMARY: FORMATION OF NEW LAO COALITION GOVERNMENT APPEARS
IMMINENT AND WE HAVE BEEN REVIEWING STATUS OF MISSION PLANNING
FOR NEW PGNU PERIOD. MANY PREPARATIONS WE HAD EARLIER RECOMMENDED
HAVE BEEN COMPLETED OVER PAST YEAR. BUT, MORE RECENTLY, WE HAVE
CONSIDERED AND TAKEN A NUMBER OF ADDITIONAL PREPARATORY STEPS,
SUMMARIZED HEREIN, FOR SUCH MATTERS AS ESTABLISHING DEFENSE
ATTACHE OFFICE, RATIONALIZING OUR COMMUNICATIONS NET, ADJUSTING
AIR SUPPORT, AND HANDLING POW/MIA ACTIVITIES. END SUMMARY.

1. NEARLY ONE YEAR AFTER SIGNING OF VIENTIANE CEASEFIRE AGREE-
MENT, FORMATION OF NEW PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNION
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(PGNU) APPEARS IMMINENT. PRIME MINISTER HAS BEEN HOPING TO

ANNOUNCE MEMBERS OF NEW PGNU AND JOINT NATIONAL POLITICAL COUNCIL (JNPC) BY FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF AGREEMENT, FEBRUARY 21, AND IF THIS TAKES PLACE, ACTUAL FORMATION OF GOVERNMENT BY INVESTITURE OF KING MAY FOLLOW WITHIN SEVERAL WEEKS. THE INVESTITURE WILL AFFECT U.S. MISSION OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT IN A NUMBER OF SIGNIFICANT WAYS. IT WILL START CLOCK RUNNING ON 60-DAY PERIOD FOR WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN MILITARY FORCES. IT WILL REINTRODUCE LPF PARTICIPATION IN CABINET, WITH THEIR PEOPLE HEADING SEVERAL MINISTRIES KEY TO OUR OPERATIONS. ALSO, FORMATION OF NEW PGNU WILL BE PRECEDED BY FULL "NEUTRALIZATION" OF VIENTIANE AND LUANG PRABANG, WHICH INCLUDES ACTIVATION OF JOINT RLG/LPF POLICE FORCES WITH BROAD JURISDICTION.

2. MISSION PLANNING FOR THE POST-CEASEFIRE PGNU PERIOD BEGAN IN OCTOBER 1972, AFTER DR. KISSINGER ANNOUNCED THAT NEGOTIATIONS WERE UNDERWAY ON AN AGREEMENT FOR VIETNAM. BETWEEN THAT TIME AND THE LAOS CEASEFIRE ON FEBRUARY 22, 1973, THIS MISSION SUBMITTED 14 MAJOR PLANNING DOCUMENTS COVERING THE RANGE OF PROBLEMS WE ANTICIPATED AFTER THE CEASEFIRE. MANY STEPS RECOMMENDED IN THESE DOCUMENTS, SUCH AS INTEGRATION OF THE IRREGULARS AND REDUCTION OF THE U.S. MISSION PROFILE, HAVE ALREADY BEEN TAKEN. OTHER PROJECTS OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE ARE STILL UNDERWAY AND RECEIVING PRIORITY ATTENTION -- SUCH AS: (A) STRENGTHENING RLG'S CAPABILITY TO RUN ITS OWN MILITARY LOGISTICS SYSTEM; AND (B) COMPLETING THE LONG TIENG/BAN XON/MOUNG CHA ALL-WEATHER ROAD TO TIE MR-II INTO REST OF RLG ZONE.

3. MORE RECENTLY, WE HAVE BEEN CONSIDERING AND TAKING A NUMBER OF OTHER PREPARATORY STEPS, AND FOLLOWING IS A BRIEF REPORT ON STATUS OF MOST IMPORTANT OF THESE:

(A) WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL AND ESTABLISHMENT OF DAO

IN CORRESPONDENCE LAST AUGUST, THE PRIME MINISTER AUTHORIZED A DAO AT THIS MISSION WITH A MILITARY COMPLEMENT NOT TO EXCEED 30 PERSONNEL, PLUS A LIMITED NUMBER OF CIVILIANS TO PERFORM ESSENTIALLY ADMINISTRATIVE AND CLERICAL TASKS. TO ASSURE THAT THESE 30 PERSONNEL ARE INCLUDED ON EMBASSY LIST AS STIPULATED UNDER TERMS OF PROTOCOL, ARTICLE XV, I SENT THE PRIME MINISTER A LETTER ON

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FEBRUARY 15 LISTING THEM BY NAME AND NOTING THAT THE NAVAL ATTACHE RESIDENT IN BANGKOK -- ALTHOUGH NOT NAMED ON THE LIST -- ALSO VISITS LAOS ACCASIONALLY. WE INTEND TO CUT THE PRESENT NUMBER OF U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL IN LAOS TO FIT INTO THE DAO 30 COMPLEMENT BY G PLUS 60. THEY WILL DEPART QUIETLY ACCORDING TO A PHASED PLAN AND THERE WILL BE NO ICC CHECKOUT. OUR PLAN ALSO COVERS DISPOSITION OF U.S.-FUNDED MILITARY EQUIPMENT.

(B) WITHDRAWAL OF THAI SGU

THIS HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF A NUMBER OF MESSAGES TO WASHINGTON THROUGH VARIOUS CHANNELS. WE BELIEVE THE THAI SGU SHOULD BE WITHDRAWN FROM LAOS AS QUICKLY AFTER PGNU-DAY AS POSSIBLE TO AVOID THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE COMMUNISTS WILL INSIST THE WITHDRAWAL BE EFFECTED THROUGH A PLAN FORMULATED BY THE JOINT CENTRAL COMMISSION AND MONITORED BY THE ICC, AS PROVIDED IN THE LAO PROTOCOL.

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 VIENTIANE 1338

CANBERRA FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY INGERSOLL

(C) RATIONALIZING COMMUNICATIONS NET

WE ARE STUDYING OUR VARIOUS COMMUNICATIONS NETS AND FACILITIES IN LAOS TO IDENTIFY AND ELIMINATE THOSE WHICH ARE DUPLICATIVE AND UNNECESSARY BY G PLUS 60. COMMUNICATIONS WITH FIELD POSTS WILL BE MAINTAINED.

(D) ADJUSTING AIR SUPPORT

(1) IN THE NEW PGNU, AN LPF MINISTER WILL HEAD THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS WHICH OVERSEES THE BUREAU OF CIVIL AVIATION. IN VIEW OF THIS SITUATION AND LPF'S WELL-KNOWN OPPOSITION TO AIR AMERICA, WE BELIEVE THAT COMPANY WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO FLY IN LAOS SHORTLY AFTER THE FORMATION OF THE NEW PGNU. WE HAVE, THEREFORE, INFORMED AIR AMERICA THAT ITS FLYING OPERATIONS IN LAOS WILL END AT G PLUS 60.

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(2) FOR TRANSPORTATION OF MISSION PERSONNEL, CLASSIFIED MATERIAL, AND PRIORITY CARGO, WE NEED TO HAVE ASSURED USE OF ONE OR TWO SMALL LIAISON-TYPE AIRCRAFT LIKE THE VOLPARS NOW OPERATED BY AIR AMERICA. WE HAVE DECIDED TO CONTRACT WITH CONTINENTAL AIR SERVICES, INC. FOR A VOLPAR OR TWIN-ENGINE CESSNA 402 OR OTHER SIMILAR AIRCRAFT BETWEEN G PLUS 60 AND JUNE 30, 1974, AND TO GIVE THE AIRCRAFT EMBASSY (VICE CONTRACTOR) MARKINGS. CONTRACTS FOR THIS AND AIR SUPPORT AFTER JUNE 30 WILL BE OPEN TO COMPETITIVE BIDDING FROM ALL COMPANIES EXCEPT AIR AMERICA.

(3) WE ARE REVIEWING WITH AMEMBASSY BANGKOK MISSION NEEDS FOR AIR SERVICES OPERATING OUT OF THAILAND (E.G. APO AND COMMISSARY) AND ASSESSING WHAT ADJUSTMENTS IF ANY NEED TO BE MADE IN PRESENT METHOD OF MEETING THESE REQUIREMENTS.

(E) MISSION GUARD SERVICE

WE HAVE DISESTABLISHED FORMER MISSION GUARD SERVICE AND HAVE CONTRACTED WITH A PRIVATE FIRM FOR THIS SERVICE. TO DEFLECT ANY POSSIBLE CRITICISM THAT THIS IS "U.S. PARA-MILITARY FORMATION," WE ARE ENCOURAGING CONTRACTOR TO LAO-IZE AND INTERNATIONALIZE THE SERVICE BY: (1) ADOPTING APPROPRIATE INSIGNIA AND MARKINGS FOR BUILDINGS, VEHICLES AND PERSONNEL; (2) REVIEWING AND DIMINISHING SCOPE OF ITS VISIBILITY AND FUNCTIONS; AND (3) SEEKING CONTRACTS FROM OTHER MISSIONS. THIS SERVICE IS NOW NAMED "TRANS-AIR PROTECTIVE SERVICES" (TAPS).

(F) POW/MIA MATTERS

WE HAVE PREPARED SCENARIOS TO GUIDE MISSION ACTIONS IN HANDLING POW/MIA QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS AFTER PGNU IS FORMED, WHICH INCLUDE PROCEDURES FOR OUTCOUNTRY PROCESSING OF DETAINEE EMMET KAY AND OF ANY OTHER POSSIBLE DETAINEES WHO MAY APPEAR.

4. FOREGOING, OF COURSE, IS AN INTERIM LISTING AND NOT A DEFINITIVE CATALOGUE OF MEASURES WHICH WILL BE REQUIRED AS WE MOVE INTO PERIOD OF NEW COALITION GOVERNMENT. WE WILL BE SUBMITTING FURTHER INFORMATION ON OTHER NECESSARY STEPS AS THE SITUATION

CONTINUES TO UNFOLD.

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